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SONNETS



BY THE

EARL OF ROSSLYN

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S O N N E T S

“ Deal gently with us, ye who read !
Our largest hope is unfulfilled,—
The promise still outruns the deed,—
The tower, but not the spire, we build.

Our whitest pearl we never find ;
Our ripest fruit we never reach ;
The flowering moments of the mind
Drop half their petals in our speech.”

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

S O N N E T S

BY

THE EARL OF ROSSLYN

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCLXXXIII

LOAN STACK

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1683



MAIN

IT HAD BEEN MY DESIRE
TO INSCRIBE THESE SONNETS
TO
L O R D B E A C O N S F I E L D,

AND
HE HAD OFTEN EXPRESSED A WISH
THAT I SHOULD DO SO.

*I NOW DEDICATE THEM TO
HIS MEMORY.*





IN MEMORIAM.

B E N J A M I N D I S R A E L I,
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

Obiit April 19, 1881.

I.

THERE lies within the grasp of our great Foe,
One of the noblest lives that England owns—
A Man, not all unused to Fortune's frowns,
Nor wasted by her smiles ; whose thoughtful brow
Uniting wide extremes of high and low,
And bravely meeting all the ups and downs
Of wayward Fate—just both to Crowds and Crowns—
Grows old with grace, as only wise men grow.
Pain and disease assail him, he alone
Is unrepining ; grateful for the past,
He suffers patient in that hope of Light
Which leads through darkness to the Great White
Throne.

Oh, Statesmen ! Patriots ! he, wellnigh the last
And greatest left, desires your prayers to-night !

LONDON, *April 16, 1881.*

A

II.

HE needs our prayers no more,—no Day, no
Night

Where his great soul abides. From “Golden
Gate”

And fair “Italian Terrace,” where but late
He walked, to Jasper Doors and Paths of Light;
And all the marvels of celestial might,
Is blessed change for one who doubted Fate
That jars with Faith, content to work and wait
Till God shall bring His hidden things to sight.
Now we who loved him, sorrowing, bare the head,
And bend the knee before his silent grave,
And lay him down this day for evermore
To dreamless slumber in his quiet bed,
Where, after many a buffet from life’s wave,
He rests at last, as on a welcome shore.

HUGHENDEN, *April 26, 1881.*

IN MEMORIAM.

R. F. B., LIEUT.-COL. GRENADIER GUARDS.

Died of his wound received at Tel-el-Kebir, Oct. 23, 1882.

TO fall full-front to foe—a soldier's death—
For this our pride may glisten through our
tears ;
But to lie wounded, racked with hopes and fears,
And slowly feel the sword wear out the sheath :
In life's rich prime to yield the joyous breath
That fanned its flame so brightly ; with such years
Of Hope (foul flatterer as he now appears)
To twine fresh foliage in thy Victor's Wreath ;—
Ay ! this is cruel—and thus hast thou died !
Alas ! how near the Glory and the Grave,
The shout of triumph and the tombstone phrase,
Cypress and Laurel ever side by side,
Prayer-hallowed tears, yet all in vain to save,
And, what thou ne'er can'st hear—thy Country's
praise !

October 29, 1882.

MRS E. BARRETT BROWNING.

STRONG-HEARTED lover of the sore-
oppressed !

Thou sleepest now by Arno's wayward stream ;
And in that sleep perchance thy life's fond dream
Of comfort for the suffering, haunts thy rest ;
Still wouldest thou clasp lone children to thy breast,
Still wouldest thou make earth's blessings richly teem
For those who want, nor judge things as they seem,
Nor choose the path of riches, for the best.

Through a sad life of duty nobly done
Rose the rich music of thy Poet-voice
For struggling childhood : sleep serenely now,
The fight is o'er ! the victory is won !

Through pain and tears, the saddest hearts rejoice
To weave the eternal laurel for thy brow !

TO ROBERT BROWNING.

WEIRD thinker-out of thoughts beyond the
ken

Of common mortals, rugged though sublime ;
Probing the inmost depths of farthest time,
Audacious,—wielding thy inscrutable pen
Like flashing falchion, dazzling thoughtless men
By thy thoughts' force, compressed in strange-
wrought rhyme.

Few feet can follow where thou lov'st to climb,
To eagle's eyrie or to lion's den !
Oh ! Master (not unaided in thy song,
By her who sleepeth now near Arno's wave,
Worthy to help thee, or with thee to write),
Deign to instruct us weaker ones, who long
To rest their wavering thoughts—not wholly brave—
Where through the obscure there shines more
perfect light.

PRINCESS ALICE.

ETERNAL life—God's gift—is Thine to-day,
Death cowers defeated—victory is Thine !

Is it not promised us, who now repine,
That the Lord God will wipe all tears away ?

We part with this frail tenement of clay
And the freed spirit soars in Heaven to shine,
Elate, majestic, glorious, and Divine,
No more to wander from the perfect way.

Oh, Thou pure Soul ! to whom to die is gain,
Whose Earthly Crown is changed for Heavenly,
send

From Thy blest home, Thy dwelling-place above,
Comfort to those who mourn,—not all in vain
Look down once more on us who wait, and blend
Our hopes, our faith, with Thy angelic love.

December 14, 1878.

TO THE SAME.

IMMORTAL Love ! great vanquisher of Death,
Hast thou too yielded to his harsh demand ?
Why didst thou not control the cruel hand
That decked the altar with a funeral wreath ?
How could such danger lie fair flowers beneath,
And spread its desolation through the land ?
What subtle poison must the Love command,
That deals destruction with its own sweet breath ?
Wife, daughter, sister, mother, best in each,
Yet calmly conscious of her Princely right !
Her life to virtuous deeds was wholly given,
“ Her voice yet speaketh,” and in words that teach :
A light that shineth e’en in Death’s dark night,
And guides the weary wanderer to Heaven.

E. R. OBIIT 1851.

H AVE all thy bright hopes faded? Has the
night
Of death victorious darkened o'er thy brow?
Are all thy dreams of life so soon decayed?
Are all thy thoughts of happiness laid low?
Yes! all are over, the too rapid flight
Of one brief year since thy fond vows were made!
Thy plighted troth redeemed, has not yet passed,
And thou art gone, too bright, too pure to last!
Oh, cruel doom, in giving life to die!
Yet happier fate, to leave some trace behind,
A relic of thy fair mortality,
Than all to perish in death's stormy wind!
Yet death's last boon is more than life can give—
For aye to rest, and yet for aye to live.

OXFORD, 1851.

TO AN INFANT,
WHOSE MOTHER DIED AT ITS BIRTH.

THOU guiltless-guilty, innocent-evil mite,
With Southern hair, and Mediterranean eyes
Gazing at this cold world in sad surprise !
Hard problem thou to solve ! Can this be right,
And thy young morn be darkened with such blight
At the first dawn of life ? Some grave surmise
Why thou shouldst suffer must perplex the wise !
No mother's arms to fold thee in the night !
Ay, babble, now, and toy with yonder flower,
Fair as thyself, and like thy mother, born
To die in youth, and yet to leave behind
A tender seedling for some happier hour.
Thy God who sent thee here this sunny morn,
To His poor lamb will temper the harsh wind.

WORTLEY, 1882.

IN MEMORIAM.

LADY F. C.

THINE! all thine! yesterday! To-day the
bride
Of Death!—The king who dominates our life—
Seizes our unweaned babes, and tears the wife
From the new-wedded arms, where love and pride
Seemed strong enough his menace to deride,
But yet were powerless in the fatal strife.
Earth teems with sorrow; every day is rife
With such grim terror as the Erl-king's ride.
Yes, she has left you,—passionless,—unstrung—
Like the mute viol—all your music fled,—
But not for long; we follow on the track
That Poets through all time have sadly sung,—
The track of starlit paths—of happy dead,
And mourn her here, but may not wish her back.

October 2, 1881.

ADMIRAL ROUS.

DIED JUNE 19, 1877, AGED 82.

“And though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow.”

LABOUR and sorrow ! Nay, at fourscore years
No sorrow bowed his venerable head,
No labour daunted or discomfited ;
His heart was young, his spirit knew no fears.
The sorrow now is ours, and ours the tears
By eyes unused to weep—now freely shed.
The merry hours, the happy days are fled,
Yet each some fond undying memory bears.
And fourscore years of faithful duty done,
Of high-souled honour, and of friendship, set
On rock foundations, are not vainly spent ;
These train a generation scarce begun,
And teach a moral none should e'er forget—
“To live uprightly is to die content.”

GEORGE WHYTE-MELVILLE.

KILLED HUNTING, DEC. 5, 1878.

THE engineer by his own petard slain,
The eagle pierced by shaft from his own
wing,
Are plaintive fancies, such as poets sing,
And touch the heart but coldly, through the brain.
But thou, dear George, in thine own sport thus ta'en
In all the prime of manhood, and the swing
Of gallant gallop struck stone-dead—the thing
Appals, and petrifies the mind with pain.
Bright, brave, and tender, Poesy's pet child,
Romance and History's lore alike were thine ;
Thy wit ne'er wounded, yet the contest won,
For at thy jest the gravest dullard smiled.
Last scion of an ancient Scottish line,
Whose "old folks" live to mourn their only Son.

December 6, 1878.

CHISLEHURST.

DEAD! my one Boy—my only one—and Dead.
Sirs, do not mock me,—say it is not so.
He was the hope of France,—nay, let me go,
I am his mother; life cannot be fled
From those young eyes, and that beloved head
That should have worn a Crown: a Crown of woe
Truly I wear for him—though fallen so low,
An Empress still, dethroned and banishéd.
I crave your pardon: now I cannot weep,
Henceforth I weep for ever; gone! all gone!
Throne, Husband, Child, all snatched away from
me;
A childless widow prays you, Sirs, to keep
Some kind thoughts for her. She is all alone,
Her heart is broken by much misery.

June 22, 1882.

LORD RAVENSWORTH.

DIED 1878.

THOU greatly gifted ! yet not well content
To idly rest on Nature's gifts alone,
But resolute for victory, as one
Who learns the art of fence, on war intent,
Thy sword is chosen without stain or dent
From learning's armoury, and its blade has shone
In peaceful strife ; thy deeds of fame are done
In classic joust and poet's tournament.
How gladly would I carry helm and spear,
A willing Squire to such a valiant Knight,
And couch a lance in this most glorious fray,
Where all who fight, each one to each, grow dear !
They welcome truth and beauty as the light
Of triumph,—pure as Heaven's eternal day.

September 6, 1874.

LADY SMITH,

ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY.

I DARE not, daring much, presume to write
On such a day mere birthday rhymes to thee !
Thou hast been chosen ! On the sheltered tree
The fruit hangs longest, and before the Night
That must come, cometh, and the fatal blight
Reach thy ripe fruit (so mellow, yet so free
From mouldy age), accept these lines from me.
I have no claim, no vestige of a right
To offer homage at thy peaceful shrine,—
Hallowed by time, a century of worth !
But though unknown, I know where virtues live,
And honoured learning makes her home divine ;
Good angels watched at thy auspicious birth,—
God guard thee still, and every blessing give.

TO THE SAME,

QUOTING ADDISON FROM MEMORY,
IN HER 104TH YEAR.

THOU wondrous Link of Time's immortal
chain !

Thou bindest Age to Age ; I pray you take
The homage of a stranger : thou dost make
The roses of the Past to bloom again.
Wide-sundered founts of pleasure and of pain
Rise up for thee to form a crystal lake,
On whose strange shores Lethéan waters break,
Yet flood thy heart's warm memory in vain ;
“ Fountains of fire ” the poet calls the Past
That memory steals to brighten present hours :
Oh ! be it fire or but some silver stream,
May it be thine, dear Lady, to the last,
To illumine all around thee with its powers,
Till life ebbs slowly in an endless dream.

December 1876.

TO THE SAME.

DIED IN HER 104TH YEAR.

THE endless dream—the dream that has no
breaking !

The dream of the Fair City's golden gates,
The white-robed throng that evermore awaits
Pure souls like thine—the dream that knows no
waking
Has come at last ; so slowly overtaking
Thy blessed life, it seemed no change of states—
No cruel severance of the fabled Fates,
But a sweet passage of thine own dear making.
Borne on the wings of wisdom year by year
To brightest human points, one Heavenly Home
Was waiting for thee long—ay, long ere this.
Thou hast fulfilled thy hope, no fainting fear—
No vain regret ! “ I come, dear Lord, I come,
And change earth's cares for everlasting bliss.”

February 2, 1877.

IN MEMORIAM.

LORD LYTTON.

THE feebleness that drags the soul to earth,
And clogs the brain, and clips the soaring
wings,
Palsies the tongue that charms, the voice that sings,
Is man's sad heritage—emblem of his birth.
There is to some a power Divine, whose worth
Is strength in weakness,—whose enchantment
brings
A life beyond the clay—far nobler things
Than rest or unrest, melancholy or mirth.
These were Thy gifts,—excelling in them all,
The young grew wise beneath Thy wizard touch,
The old bloomed young again, Death lost his sway,
For Genius mocks his ineffective thrall !
All praise be Thine—and yet not overmuch—
Thy fame—the dawning of an endless day.

IN MEMORIAM.

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL TAIT,

ARCHBISHOP.

THE chalice of Thy holy life is dry !

Already sounds the Angel's welcome voice
That bids Thee hasten home ; " Rejoice, rejoice !
The saints rejoice whenever good men die ! "

O Servant of the Lord ! Thy fearless eye
Now weeps no more ! such death had been Thy
choice—

No cruel pang to shake the equipoise

Of Thy true-balanced mind in agony !

Thy thoughts, perchance, turned to the heathery
haunts

Of childhood, whence Thy simple Bible-lore,

That raised Thee to the highest throne of Priest.

Then smiling (for no dying terror daunts
Such hearts), he passed to loved ones gone before,
Who waited for him ;—Greatest, and yet Least !

ADVENT SUNDAY, 1882.

IN MEMORY OF

THE DOÑA MERCEDES DE BOURBON,

QUEEN OF SPAIN, CONSORT OF ALPHONSO XII.

Married, January 23, 1878; Died, June 26, 1878; aged 18.

ON the occasion of the marriage of King Alphonso to his young cousin, Doña Mercedes, the Author was appointed Special Ambassador at the Court of Spain. The impression made upon him, and upon those who accompanied him in his Embassy, was, that the alliance was one of pure love—deep, simple, and sincere. The warm, generous disposition of the King, and the calm, serene, confiding character of his beloved bride, seemed to promise a life of domestic happiness such as Spain at all events had never witnessed in her rulers; but this was destined, as we all now know, to be cut short by the hand of death. The incidents referred to in each sonnet actually occurred; and a letter to the Author from the King, signed “*votre affligé Alphonse*,” testifies alike to the passionate depths of his love, and to the intensity of his sorrow.

I.

The poor King remains leaning on her bed, and calling on her name, “Mercedes! Mercedes mia!” To the last her eyes were turned on the King.

I have seen him twice,—all he said was, “That for him there was no consolation, but that he would do his duty.”—
Extract from a Private Letter from Madrid.

MERCEDES MIA! turn thine eyes away,
I have no power to grant their longing
prayer,

Their mute appeal is more than I can bear.

Could I but snatch thee from Death's cruel sway
God knows how gladly I would give this day
My life for thine. For whom have I to care
When thou art gone? The darkness of despair
Clouds all my heart with terror and dismay.

Mercedes mia! I am brave once more!

My eyes will weep no more until the end,
But steadfastly, beloved, gaze in thine
Till Death arrest their sight. What! is all o'er?
Then farewell Hope! and farewell truest Friend!
Now Duty's rugged path be only mine!

II.

From that window of his ancestral home, this young Monarch watched the train departing for the Escurial. Long after it had left, he continued steadily looking in the direction taken by the mortal remains of his darling bride.— Special Correspondence of the 'Standard.'

THE sandy ridges of that barren plain
(A weird wild bleakness of infinity),
Melt into space before his throbbing eye,
And his heart aches with agonising pain,
As swiftly speeds the dark funereal train,
Bearing away his Queen—too young to die—
His bride—his loyal love's idolatry—
To the Escurial's gloomy-gorgeous fane !
In the high casement of his stately home,
In tearless anguish, sits the Lord of all ;
His fixéd gaze, true as the polar star,
Points without changing to that dreary dome,
Where a thin wreath of smoke, like a grey pall,
Still guides his faithful sorrow from afar.

III.

SILENCE AND TEARS.

IT may be speech can ease the troubled heart,
But there are thoughts no tongue can e'er
express,
Thoughts drowned in tears and steeped in bitterness,
That of our inmost being form a part
Yet are unutterable. When the strings start
And snap asunder, dumb and passionless
Fades the faint music, like a last caress,
And gone for ever is the master's art !
When the proud vessel, ere her sails be spread,
Is wrecked in port ; how can I dare to say,
“Sire ! winds will grow more tranquil, and the wave
Smooth its blue back for thy Imperial tread” ?
How can I choose but kneel, and humbly pray
With thee, sad Monarch, by the silent grave ?

IV.

THE silent grave ! nay, leave her not among
The marble tombs of thy ancestral dead
(Too hard a pillow for so fair a head),
But lay her tenderly where Poet's song
May consecrate thy love's undying wrong :
Where flowers and sunshine, Heaven's bright gifts,
may shed
Fresh fragrance daily o'er her lonely bed,
And all her people may around her throng !
For life is but a day of work for all,—
And Death is sleep,—another name for rest—
Eternal rest,—for Peasant or for Queen.—
So here let flowers her grace and youth recall
(Like her, short-lived, the brightest and the best),
And grief find comfort in the peaceful scene !

July 3, 1878.

TO MY WIFE.

I.

LIGHT of my life, dear Wife, I write to thee ;
Do not, like captious critic, judge my lines,
For my whole heart, like ivy, intertwines
The words so old, yet ever new to me !
In all thy sufferings I must bear my part,
As in thy joys I joy to have my share ;
And if, to-night, God gives thee more to bear,
I too will bear it, with a willing heart.
Life is made up of suffering and delight—
Suffering, short-lived ; delight, thank God, how
long ;
And ere the sunrise of to-morrow's morn
Thou wilt forget the anguish of to-night ;
And through long years thou wilt recall my song,
And, smiling, cry, “No rose without a thorn.”

II.

WHEN all my thoughts are turned to thee
alone,
How can I sleep, except I dream of thee ?
How can I, waking, join in gaiety,
When half my smiles for thee are woe-begone ?
Thou art my Sun ! and if my Sun has shone,
I glory like a lizard, basking free
In the full noon-tide of my revelry,
Or like a welcome courtier near the throne.
But darker dreams will force their dreadful way
Through the long watch of night, and sunny hours
Sometimes will yield to vapours from the East.
Shine then, sweet Wife, like hawthorn buds in May
With opening promise ! and Celestial powers
Send us blest fruit from love's abundant feast !

III.

O FEAR ! O Hope ! sisters, alas ! in blood,
And yet of alien races ! Why does Fate
Blend all my life with yours ? I wait and wait
In Hope and Fear each night—an anxious mood !
Love ! many cruel words hast thou withstood,
But thou must bear this blame ; I learn too late
Thou drivest sleep through the fair ivory gate,
And Fear and Hope spring from thy varied brood ;
Yet in my Hope, Fear holds me somewhat right,
Lest I grow over-fond, and in my Fear
Hope cheers me onward, lest I all despair ;
And in both Hope and Fear love clasps me tight,
And keeps me ever watchful o'er my Dear,
Whose joys and sorrows are my fondest care !

IV.

WHOM can I love but Thee? Is not my
heart,
So full of love, wholly and solely thine?
And if true love—of earth the one divine,
Unchanging, holy thing—thou dost impart,
It were strange barter in an unfair mart,
Did I not give,—nay,—lay upon the shrine
I best can worship at, that poor thing—mine.
On life's rough ocean take it for thy chart!
And now, when Nature's tribute, Love's harsh toll
Weighs heavily on thy spirit, learn Love's lore
From fondest volume, certified and sure.
Emblazoned on imperishable scroll,
Our love shall shine, Belovéd, more and more,
And deathless through all ages shall endure!

V.

THE Spring, long since, has shaded her blue
eyes

With the thick verdure of the Summer leaves ;
And now the heart o'er parting Summer grieves,
Loath to greet Autumn and her cloudy skies.

Yet, in despite of sorrow, Autumn comes
Rich with her golden gifts, and bounteous store
She brings to gladden many a cottage door,
And send the gleaners happy to their homes.

Too soon will Autumn, shivering, shrink away,
And leafless Winter, herald of Christ's birth,
Bring other hopes, and whisper holier joy.

Thus every season has its happy day ;
God gives to each its own allotted mirth :
Most blest to Thee the one that brings thy Boy.

VI.

SLEEP soundly, Sweetheart, though the winds
blow high
And snow-wreaths crown the buds of early spring ;
Like a true mate at resting-time I sing
A tender carol for thy lullaby.
Dread nothing, Dearest, when thy love is nigh,
And nestle close beneath the downy wing
Of slumber ; spite of tempests murmuring,
Thy God will guard thee with a Father's eye.
Blest in thy faith, thy children, and thy love,
Raise, ere thou sleep'st, to God thy grateful heart,
Whose mercy keeps thee both by night and day ;
Lift thy dear voice in praise and prayer above,
So shalt thou prosper in that better part
He promises to all who watch and pray.

VII.

I LECTURE ? Sweet ! when thou art near,
thy eyes

Discourse unanswerably to my heart ;
And all my reason, all my nobler part,
Yields to thy lecture's tender sympathies.
As the loud notes are hushed in symphonies,
And bend their music to consummate art,
Lulled by a skill no untrained hands impart,
So sinks my soul in gratified surprise.
Surprise ! nay, why surprise ? for Love must rule
In every moment of my happiest hours,
In every motion of my too-blest life,
And whip me back, a dullard, to that school
Where learning ever laughs ; where crowned with
flowers,
My sternest master is my darling Wife.

VIII.

YOU bid me write a sonnet to the year,
Whose dying moments tremble in the grasp
Of Time's relentless hand, whose final gasp—
Feeble and faint—comes nearer, and more near.
Dearest, thy loving hand dries every tear;
And every moment, fleeting but too fast,
Speaking so solemnly of the changeless past,
But tells me truly that you grow more dear.
The gentle guidance of a Heavenly grace,
Thy guileless sympathy for other's woe,
Sustain thee in thy trials from above,
Lend a new charm to thy endearing face,
And if thou needest comfort from below,
Oh, seek it always in thy husband's love !

December 31, 1868.

IX.

O H, blame me not because my verse is rare !
Deem not my heart is idle as my song !
Thou know'st to thee such melodies belong,
As my poor pen can haltingly prepare ;
But my full heart of no such blame takes share,
And to blame that would do it grievous wrong,
For still its stream flows passionate and strong,
And pays no tribute but to thee, my Fair !
If, then, I sing not, 'tis because too full,
The river of my heart o'erleaps its banks,
And to one ocean, Thine, pours out its tide ;
And mocking spirits might proclaim me dull,
And even thou wouldest give me meagre thanks,
If while I praised thee, others should deride.

X.

DOST thou regret the seeming hard decrees
Of Providence, sweet Wife, that keep thee
far

From thy dear children? Yonder glittering star
Is far removed from us, yet still it sees
With loving light each night upon thy knees
Thy suppliant form pray God no ill may mar
Thy darlings, or no cruel chance debar
That blissful meeting when His will shall please.
Regret them not: that star is like thy heart,
Distant, yet ever present, pure and bright;
And though so very far, is ever near.
Soon shall all sickness pass, and then thy part
Of hopeful waiting for the promised light
Will be rewarded without stint or fear.

XI.

MORN after morn I tremble at each sound,
That breaks my loved one's short uneasy
sleep ;
Fever and pain their constant vigil keep,
And I, poor sentinel, pace my dreary round.
Ah me ! what sounds of horror do abound
In this great city ere the sunbeams peep
From out their cloudy coverlet ! Yon Steep,
With battlemented castle grimly crowned,
Is first, with bugle-blare, the day to greet ;
And then belated brawlers stagger home,
And heavy wains, high-laden with the store
Of country produce, grind along the street ;
And engines, savage whistling, slowly come,
And cruel hammers beat the neighbouring floor.

EDINBURGH, 1876.

XII.

(To be read with No. XI.)

HOW quakes my heart at each ! my nerves
strung tight,
Wrestling with all these fiends that murder sleep,
Sink in untuned vibration ; and I weep
From very weakness ; till at last the light
Dawns rosier, fuller on my wearied sight.
And once again the tram-cars jingling creep,
And jostling cabs run rattling up the steep,
And a stray sunbeam makes the world more bright.
Sleep on, in spite of all, for love has won
The victory for thee ; and soon, sweet Wife,
Thou shalt forget thy sorrow and thy pain,
And, in returning health (now scarce begun)
Shalt find new hopes to animate thy life,
And e'en from suffering make a lasting gain.

EDINBURGH, October 8, 1876.

XIII.

MY VALENTINE.

ONCE more I write to thee; ten changeful
years

Have brought maturer love and not less true :
Our mid-day sun shines proudly, though the hue
He sheds is deeper than the morning wears,
And gold and violet, not rose-tint appears.
Dearest ! nor time nor care can make us rue,
If in life's eventide our heaven of blue
No darker shade than God's own sunset bears !
Thou hast been brave in suffering ; and in joy
No heart more joyous ; thou hast shared with me
A Decade of life's trials—not severe,
But still life's trials : gold without alloy
Serves scanty purpose : mayst thou ever be
Blest in that Love which casteth out all Fear.

February 14, 1876.

XIV.

OUR 12TH WEDDING-DAY.

HOW strangely swift advancing years roll by,
Laden with joy's and sorrow's mingled
load,
Down the dark path of life's uneven road,
Whose milestones' only mark is Memory !
Twelve years have passed, Sweetheart, since thou
and I
Joined hand to hand and vowed our vows to God
And to each other, and as one abode ;
And thus may we abide until we die !
By sickness sorely saddened and oppressed,
Yet urged by love that knows no dull decline,
Thou hast kept Tryst,—twelve touching years do
prove
Thou on thy husband's constant heart canst rest,
Thy arms with his once more canst intertwine,
And laugh at Time that only adds to love.

November 8, 1878.

“TOUT ARRIVE À POINT À QUI SAIT
ATTENDRE.”

IF to good waiters all things good arrive—
As speaks the ancient proverb in my text—
Then may I call thee “good,” and though perplext
As stranger Bee within an unknown hive,
Yet welcome as the day ; oh, mayst thou thrive
In virtue and in wisdom ! rarely vext
By the world’s troubles, and the cares annext
By cruel Fate to everything alive !
Dear “Boy”—sweet little word to mother’s ears
Whose nursery teems with girls !—sweet sound to me
Whose lineage languished, last of an old race
Which her love lovingly renewed, whose fears
Are now a saucy jest between us three,
Though when I smile she hides her joyous face.

TO DAISY.

CHILD of my love, though yet not mine in blood,
How fairest thou now? beaming with blue-eyed mirth
And rose-hued health? What corner of the earth
Fills thy young head? That carnage-stricken flood
Where the slow Othman with persistent mood
Beats back the lying Russ? Doth pale-eyed dearth,
That haunts the Madrassee's penurious hearth
Beg for thy pity—for his daily food?
Or, Darling, doth the Jasmine climb too high?
Or red-roan Ellie seek her wonted crust?
Or loud-voiced Spangle call his faithful dame?
Do these attract thee? or, although less nigh,
Are thy thoughts given in unreserved trust
To me, thy Father in all else save name?

TO HARRY.

IT is no blame, my Boy, to thee nor me,
If I should be severe or seem so now;
For love exacts perfection, asks not how,
But sternly claims the rightful deed should be.
E'en so my love demands all things from thee,
That should beseem the seeds that in thee grow,
And plant completeness on thy smooth young brow;
The well-trained sapling makes the fairest tree.
Be guided then by thy fond father's word,
Make honest men thy friends, thy watchword Truth,
Be generous as thou mayest: hating strife
Protect the weak: and if thou draw'st the sword,
Ne'er sheathe it till victorious: make thy youth
The pure first chapter of thy Book of Life.

January 29, 1881.

APRIL 30, 1881.

SMILE on us, ancient Abbey, grim and grey,
The gentle smile of all-forgiving age !
Write one more story on your time-worn page :
Blow, sweet south wind, upon this happy day,
Break into leaf “ ye darling buds of May ! ”
Love reigns supreme—a service without wage,
Where all are willing, Senator and Sage
Bend to the flowery yoke, and own his sway :
Ring out, old bells, and welcome this dear pair,
Who join their hands this day in life-long troth ;
God’s blessing rest upon their faithful love !
Fulfil their joyous dreams, make their life fair,
Smooth its rough places tenderly for both,
And parted here, renew their bliss above !

HOMBURG.

I KNOW a nook beneath a sheltered hill,—
Sheltered from summer's glare, or winter's
wind,
Whence the far-seeing eye may hardly find
A boundary, its feeble span to fill,
So vast the billowy plain, which spreads, until
The purple hills, forming their ranks behind,
Squadron on squadron, daunt the gazer's mind
With their recurrent shapes, so grand and still,
So distant yet so visible. Could they
Descend in serried order, each 'gainst each,
And multiply by millions, the dread blast
Of the Archangel's trump might guide the fray
And stir such hosts to scale the deadly breach :
But while I gazed, the wondrous Vision passed !

August 7, 1877.

MONT BLANC.

ONCE more, great Teacher, at thy feet I rest,
Once more I gaze upon thy storm-clad
brow,

Now lustrous in fresh covering of snow,
That like a mane floats from thy thunderous crest.
As from some hoary sage, whose wisdom best
Springs from green heart, thy lessons also flow
From bosom where green things eternal grow,
And head whose whiteness Heaven itself hath
prest.

Thirty long years have fled since first I came
To worship thee, a lad whose fondest hopes
Have come and gone in undeserved success ;
Still lingers faintly the perfervid flame
Of youth—renewed while loitering on thy slopes,
Sublimest shrine of Nature's holiness !

CHAMOUNIX, *August 28, 1876.*

LAUTERBRUNNEN.

O GOD ! Thy gracious works are manifest
In Desert and in City ; Plain and Hill
Alike declare Thy omnipresent skill ;
Yet here, if anywhere, they seem the best ;
These giant mountains, at their base, caressed
By tender turf and gently rippling rill ;
The rose-hued snow, sunlit, or at Thy will
Storm-blackened, veiling their untrodden crest ;
The feathery pines that point to Thee, the spray
That kisses the gaunt rock from yonder fall,
The resonant bells attuned by browsing kine,
The fair-haired children by the grassy way,
The sturdy mountaineer's re-echoing call,
Thou seest all are good, and all are Thine.

August 22, 1876.

CALVARY.

THE mocking gibe ! the cruel taunt ! if heard
Unanswered by the lips now sealed in
death ;

The last sigh breathed in love ; the parting breath
A prayer for pardon for that bitter word.

“ He savéd others ! ” as the parent bird
Gives her own life to save the young beneath
Her loving wing ; He died,—the immortal wreath
For others wreathe, by suffering undeterred.

“ Himself He cannot save ! ” Omnipotent,
He would not use this power—the angel’s sword—
That could have saved the Saviour, and have left
Mankind accurséd, and His mission spent
In vain ! Thou Son of Man ! Divinest Lord !
What had we sinners been—Thou saved, we left ?

PATHETIC HUMOUR.

THERE is no limit fixed by God or man
Between our laughter and our tears: the
touch
Of nature, tinged with pathos overmuch,
Fills the soft heart and ready eyes that scan
With unresisting glance, the subtle plan
That melts, or moves to laughter. There be such
Whose truth, half-halting, borrows Fiction's crutch
The chasm of our credulity to span !
But when enlisted in the ranks of right,
Of want relieved, and suffering and wrong
Made good by noble deeds and thoughts and
words,
Our simple hearts o'erflow; the pulse of might
Beats stronger, and sometimes to these belong
Great gifts of Humour sharper than all swords.

THE WOOD-NYMPH.

THE lime-trees shed their blossoms, and the
scent
Filled the light air that dallied round the grove ;
The honeysuckle tendrils deftly wove
A net to catch them,—sweets on sweets intent :
The thyme scarce crushed (for She a-tiltoe went),
Breathed a faint tribute of its dying love,
Clinging about her footsteps as they move,
And all the wood in smiling homage bent.
Fair as young buds in early spring, one hand
Led in rose-fetters a new-captured fawn,
The other held a palm-leaf, from the stream
That trickled through the thicket,—like the wand
Of some Enchantress. Gracious as the Dawn
She passed, this Oread of the Poet's dream.

October 13, 1878.

BEDTIME.

'T IS bedtime; say your hymn, and bid "Good-night,
"God bless Mamma, Papa, and dear ones all,"
Your half-shut eyes beneath your eyelids fall,
Another minute you will shut them quite.
Yes, I will carry you, put out the light,
And tuck you up, although you are so tall !
What will you give me, Sleepy one, and call
My wages, if I settle you all right ?
I laid her golden curls upon my arm,
I drew her little feet within my hand,
Her rosy palms were joined in trustful bliss,
Her heart next mine beat gently, soft and warm
She nestled to me, and, by Love's command
Paid me my precious wages—"Baby's Kiss."

October 30, 1882.

FOREBODING.

I KNOW not if the sufferings we expect,
Are lessened when they come, or if the pain
That sudden strikes us, when the heart and brain
No evil dream, no coming ill suspect,
Is worse to bear. Rather I think the first,
For we so oft anticipate and dread
Some greater woe, when small ones come instead,
That our Foreboding is itself the worst.
The same holds good with Joy : we fondly hope
To realise our day-dream, eagerly look
For some fair vision far beyond the truth ;
The soul o'erleaps its too contracted scope,
And treats its wish from some romantic book,
But finds, alas ! its golden fancy—Ruth.

DAYBREAK IN PARIS.

THE rosy gleam of newly kindled day
Just tips yon gilded Dome, as Paris wakes.
Before the lingering stars depart, or breaks
The full-orbed morning, *débonnaire* and gay :
The country wains, with loads of fragrant hay,
Creep slowly in, and Norman “Surefoot” makes
His bell-clad head-gear jingle, as he takes
A sly bite, half in earnest, half in play.
Thus while late sleepers dream, the busy toil
To feed the idle—and the blue-smocked clown
Is happier far than they who glove their hands.
His sweet-breathed hay to him is better spoil
Than ill-got gold, his team worth all the town,
And his fair France the bravest of all lands.

PARIS, *July 28, 1878.*

A STORM AT SEA.

GREAT clouds, like war-ships, speed athwart
the sky,
And the white drift, a full-set mainsail, gleams :
The savage blast, through the taut cordage screams,
Or fitful moans with melancholy cry :
Around, the raging waters foaming lie
In frenzied wrath, and not a sun-ray beams.
The mother, in her broken slumber, dreams
Of her dear sailor, shuddering lest he die !
Ocean runs riot ! and the bruiséd waves
Are blue and green with overmastering blows ;
The tangled weeds, disturbed, torn from their bed
A hundred fathoms down 'mid sailors' graves,
Toss here and there, as light as fresh-fallen snows,
And dismal caves disgorge their prisoned dead.

DEAD.

I KNOW not what I write, the pen must frame
The words that rush in heart-leaps from my
soul ;
No rhythmic cadence in well-ordered roll,
But passionate thoughts that have nor place nor
name ;
These are not lines aglow for future fame,
Rounded to please, smooth-smirking and heart-whole,
But wild with sorrow that defies control,
And anguish time can neither heal nor tame :
We were one age, one hope, one life, one dream,
She fair as Dawn's first rose-beam on the snow ;
We parted—but to meet at break of day ;
For her the day ne'er broke, the eternal stream
Bore her sweet soul on its resistless flow,
And left me on the brink in dumb dismay.

November 13, 1878.

AFTER PETRARCH.

I.

Laura, thou fairest laurel of my crown,
Thou leaflet ever green to my fond heart,
Not Death himself can force us twain apart,
Or daunt our spirits with his withering frown ;
If Thou, pure Seraph, on bright wings hast flown
To God's own heaven, *my* Laura still thou art,
And Thou to angels canst new grace impart,
Not they to Thee ; and Thou art all mine own.
I follow swiftly, but I live in Thee,
And Thou in me eternally shalt live.
We heed not the sharp spasm miscalléd Death,
Genius and Love make Immortality,
And Thou and I to each can either give,
And blend our names in one undying wreath.

SKEFFINGTON, *February 25.*

II.

WHEN I am wearied of the wavering light
Which flickers from the passions that
deceive—

The lying loves—whose flames are make-believe,—
I turn in peace to one serene and bright,
The fire of my own love, that through the night
Sheds its pure steadfast ray. How can I grieve,
When morn, and noon, and midnight all receive
From it a perfect radiance in my sight?
The softest breeze that plays about my brow,
Breathes its sweet fragrance from my constant love,
And the clear Heaven from it derives its blue ;
'Tis some angelic Spirit whispering low
Dear words of hope that all my pains remove,
Soul of my Soul, immaculate and true !

III.

IN the full summer of her beauteous prime,
When love's rich foliage all its verdure kept,
My Laura from my circling arms was swept,—
A tender blossom plucked before its time.
Was my wild love for her so great a crime,
That in the flush of life to Heaven she leapt?
Can She the eternal sleep of death have slept,
And live no more but only in my rhyme?
Why have I thus survived? Her latest day
Had been for both the first of love renewed;
Though all unworthy, yet would I have tried
To quit all grosser attributes of clay;
And with Her dying purity imbued,
In death for ever have been sanctified.

BYRON.

A MIND diseased? nay, rather, out of tune,
Like some fine instrument in cruel hands ;
A little tenderness the tone commands,
And a rough touch (like wintry winds in June)
Checks the true note, and turns the music soon
To discord : so he wandered through strange lands
And “all his sweet bells jangled,” and he stands
An outcast, tainted i’ th’ full o’ th’ moon !
Oh that such madness were more common ! None
To make it or to mar it—genius, such
As his, driven to revolt by meaner soul,
That knew not what it meddled with ! Ne’er shone
The sun on nobler heart, but, overmuch
His spirit, vexed, lost hope and self-control.

DROWNED.

CAN danger lurk beneath that placid wave,
Where the great lazy water-lilies float
In safe and careless beauty ? where the throat
Of warbling sedge-bird from his reedy cave
Swell with a joyous song—where still streams lave
The grassy banks ? Can these such ills denote,
Or presage peril to the little boat ?
Can lilyed crystal be a maiden's grave ?
Alas ! we know not what may be the fate
Of hapless hundreds,¹ or the doom of one !
Our tears alone are left us, and we shed
Tears from a fount that never dries ; too late,
Yet all too soon—our children come—are gone,
And we are left to mourn the darlings dead.

¹ On this day occurred the disaster to the Princess Alice steamer in the Thames.

THE THROSTLE.

I.

THE throstle sang his loudest song to-day;
Though the bleak north-wind grasped his
joyous throat,
It could not check the clear courageous note,
That welcomed March as cheerily as May.
'Tis surely wise to be thus early gay,
Nor wait for calms before we go afloat,
But bravely launch from shore our little boat,
And sing in hope our spring-tide Roundelay ;
Such trust will be repaid : for they who wait
For summer, wait, and fearing, wait in vain :
They who dare nothing, and restrain their song
Till the hour suits them, never can be great ;
But will with troublous care and frequent pain
Make evil choice at last and take the wrong.

II.

A LAS, for confident philosophy !
A few short hours, and all my braggart
thrush
Can pipe to us now is but a doleful “Hush,”—
“A white world” makes his hopes of spring to die,
And turns his love-songs to despondency.
The snow hangs grimly on the lilac bush
Where yestermorn the leaflets strove to push
Through the thin sheaths where they imprisoned
lie !
I would not therefore praise the overbold,
Who fall, as fell rash Phaeton from his car
By too much daring and too little art :
The earliest blossoms perish in the cold :
A skilful marksman shoots not over far :
Thus, midway steering, play we life’s great part.

THE DUEL.

GREY, cold, and haggard rose the clouds that
veiled

The morning sun : e'en so the thoughts that paced
The narrow prison of his angry breast.

That stern, proud, anxious brow, too surely paled,
And through each swollen vein the hot blood
raced ;

While dark resolve each throbbing pulse comprest.
To die is nothing : could he dare to kill
His fellow, and not pause ? Ah ! no ; a smile
Lights up his face, as flowers adorn a tomb,
In every feature gleams determined will
That one must die ; he reasons, " Blackest guile
Calls loud for vengeance ; 'tis a righteous doom : "
Then face to face—O God ! a moment more,
A flash, a cry, a fall, and all is o'er !

“ORA E SEMPRE !”

“ORA E SEMPRE !” when the morn of life
Bursts from rose-tinted clouds in eastern
skies,

And all the promise of their radiant dyes
With hope, and mirth, and revelry is rife.

“Ora e sempre !” when our manhood’s strife
Wrestles within, and sterner duty tries
The heart’s wild passion, with grey pitiless eyes
And cuts it from us with relentless knife.

“Ora e sempre !” every moment shows
The need for action or for earnest will,
For patient suffering or for sympathy
That, scorning self, with generous impulse glows;
And when our Sun sets, calm, and cold, and still,
“Ora e sempre” in Eternity !

AN INTERIOR.

A BLUE-VEINED marble, here and there
besmeared
With faded reddish stains, like blood long shed,
On forty pillars bore an oaken roof,
Worm-pierced and blackened, frowning grim and
weird,
And graven with sad memories of the dead ;
Eastward, a Moorish window, like a hoof
That narrows at the heel, let in the light
Caparisoned in colours ; westward, shone
The brazen throats that swell the choir around,
Like spectral figures mystically bright.
Hark ! soft and tender melts the dying tone,
Now full and clear—an avalanche of sound ;
And now 'tis mute. Ah ! they who sleep below
Heed not the tide of music's ebb and flow !

PHIOMEL.

COME forth, and hear the Nightingale ! the
wind

Scarce stirs a leaf ; the moon has light enough
To guide our steps ; in yonder wood I know
Where Philomel by night laments her mate.

The sky like armour gleams, sure sign of rough
Wild weather ere the morn : so trust the kind
And gentle evening that invites you now,
We prize God's simplest blessings all too late !
Hark ! how each mourner strains a throbbing
throat,

And triumphs in her ecstasy of woe !
Now the air rings with long-continued note,
And now the trembling cadence whispers low ;
Faint Echo panting labours through the glade,
Such heavenly strains perplex the weary maid.

TO THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.,
ON HIS RETURN FROM BERLIN.

WHEN from the battle-field some Chief
returning,
Brings back the trophies of successful war,
Though now no more to his triumphal car
Are captives chained, still hearts bereft are
mourning,
And hatred and revenge are fiercely burning
In bosoms racked with sorrow: now the Star
Of Peace victorious shineth from afar,
All angry thoughts to hope and mercy turning.
No mother weeps her darling boy laid low;
No pale-eyed maid laments her loved one slain;
But maid and matron bless the happy day,
And weave a crown of myrtle for thy brow;
For Thou hast warred with war, turned loss to gain,
And passed in triumph from the bloodless fray.

PARIS, *July 24, 1878.*

TO THE SAME.

A LOVING hand, ah ! would it had been mine !
Has garnered, from the harvest of Thy heart
Words of true wisdom ; though but meagre part
Of Thy wise sayings, they are truly Thine :
The thoughts are human, but a power divine
Gives truth, and purity, and force : they start
Like natural well-springs, without visible art,
Yet art, unseen, controls ; how subtly fine !
But beyond art, the Patriot's loving soul
Rich in the prescience of the Statesman's craft,
Baffles the braggart, and the weak defends,
Tempers wild dreams with unperceived control,
Drives falsehood forth with truth's unerring shaft,
And rich and poor in kindly union blends.

THE KNIGHTHOOD OF THE CROSS.

THERE is a Knightly Order, nobler far
Than all the ranks of Chivalry can claim—
An order founded not on earthly fame,
Not decked with jewelled blazon or with star,
Not graced by trophies or triumphal car—
It is the Cross of Christ, whose lowly name
Puts pride to blush and vanity to shame—
The Prince of Peace who only wars with war.
Love is the sweet esquire of Christ's true knight,
And Death "Grand Master," whose austere embrace
Chills the warm heart and checks the joyous breath
But for a moment,—then the Neophyte,
Inspired and glorious, gives, with radiant face,
The kiss of Life—the Accolade of Death !

CHRISTMAS-DAY, 1878.

GOETHE'S PRAYER.

“MORE Light, more Light,” the Poet’s plaintive prayer,
Ere his eyes close for ever in Death’s night !
The fainting supplication for “more Light,”
No common struggle for a purer air,
But physical and spiritual joining there,
He prays for rescue from the awful night
Of Doubt, that daunts the soul, and blinds the
sight,
And makes all dark, that should be bright and fair.
“More Light, more Light,” in life to Thee we pray,
Great God ! wise man to Thee ! (Creator Thou,
Created in His image thou,) this cry
Of dying Goethe ; in our earthly day
• The light of knowledge—truth with open brow—
And God’s own Light to guide us when we die.

OLD LETTERS.

IT seems but yesterday she died, but years
Have passed since then: the wondrous
change of time
Makes great things little—little things sublime,
And sanctifies the dew of daily tears.
She died, as all must die; no trace appears
In History's page, nor save in my poor rhyme,
Of her, whose life was love, whose lovely prime
Passed sadly where no sorrows are, nor fears.
It seems but yesterday; to-day I read
A few short letters in her own dear hand,
And doubted if 'twere true. Their tender grace
Seems radiant with her life! Oh! can the Dead
Thus in their letters live? I tied the band,
And kissed her name as though I kissed her face.

NOT HERE.

LAST week I saw the lilac's budding leaf;
This week I see the lilac's buds all strewn,
The leaflets scattered, and the bloom o'erthrown
By sudden icy blasts as chill as grief.
Such promise marred, like faith by unbelief,
Such hope destroyed without a warning word,
Like the flushed revellers by the impending sword,
Where may we turn in anguish for relief?
Not Here; for east winds freeze the heart—not
Here!
But where eternal summers blossom—there
Where God's unchanging seasons bring sure fruit,
In the pure climes of Heaven, Blesséd Sphere,
Where radiant suns are present everywhere,
And Heavenly Hands protect the tender shoot.

AMONG MY BOOKS.

A LONE, 'midst living works of mighty dead,
Poets and scholars versed in history's lore,
With thoughts that reached beyond them and
before,
I dream, and leave their glorious works unread ;
Their greatness numbs me both in heart and head.
I cannot weep with Petrarch, and still more
I fail when I would delve the depths of yore,
And learn old Truths of modern lies instead ;
The shelves frown on me blackly, with a life
That ne'er can die, and helpless to begin,
I can but own my weakness, and deplore
This waste, this barren brain, ah ! once so rife
With hope and fancy. Pardon all my sin,
Great Ghosts that wander on the Eternal Shore.

December 24, 1876.

FORGET-ME-NOT.

“ **H**AST thou no loving message from thy
tomb,
Dear Father? Sleepest thou in mute decay,
Silently waiting for that awful day
When the great Judge of all shall speak our doom?
Is there no light with thee? doth cheerless gloom
Compass thee ever? If thou canst, oh! say
Thou restest peacefully, though far away—
From this fair earth—its sunlight and its bloom.”
I yearned to hear some voice, but none replied
Save the rich note of the new-wedded thrush,
Who carolled over-joyous with his lot;
When, as I gazed on the dear grave, I spied
A little blue flower softly whispering, “ Hush!
My name is thy reply—*Forget-me-not!*”

May 1878.

TRUE REST.

WHAT do men long for, strive for, live for
most?

The purple mantle of ambitious dreams ?
The lying gold that clouds the fairest streams ?
The sacred fervour that adores the Host ?
In all pure nature's simple love is lost,
And truth is farthest when it nearest seems.
O Earth, thy bosom with corruption teems,
And war meets war, and none e'er count the cost.
Great Heaven, how just are thy decrees to all !
How seeming hard to some ! For faith I pray,
For truth and for content ; then death is blest ;
Then virtue, silver-crowned, spreads out our pall,
And all our life is patent as the day,
And after labour comes Seraphic Rest.

SYMPATHY IN FRIENDSHIP.

THE tone of a soft voice—a tender smile
That in our happy moments bears its part—
The inexplicable yearning of the heart
For some dear face, a stranger to all guile,
(A face wrath ne'er can cloud, guilt ne'er defile,
Nor sorrow darken, save for others' smart !)
Such faces their own purity impart,
And teach true sympathy ; the cunning wile,
That makes pretence of feeling for the pain
And grief of others, like a mirror gleams,
Whose light reflects each dull contiguous face.
Thus friendship in true sympathy grows plain,
And sympathy in friendship fondly beams :
False friends, false sympathy, make one disgrace.

THE GATES OF DEATH.

WE enter Life but through the gates of Death,
Those dismal portals cinctured by a
moat—

A flood of human tears ; vile passions gloat
And glare on us like gogoyles, with rank breath,
And eyes aflame, around, above, beneath.
But God's good angel guides our little boat,
That safely homewards seems unsteered to float,
With sword of fire uplift, full-drawn from sheath.
Safe, safe, at last from doubt, from storm, from
strife,

Moored in the depths of Christ's unfathomed grace
With spirits of the just, with dear ones lost
And found again ; this strange ineffable life
Is Life Eternal ! Death has here no place,
And they are welcomed best who suffered most.

INSIDE PARIS.

THEY banquet on dead bodies, like the ghouls,
Who, tasting blood, grow dainty, and refuse
More wholesome diet : could these maniacs choose
Once more, their choice would be the same ; mad
fools

Who manacle fair freedom ; wretched tools,
Mixed up with felons, scum of men, who use
The plots of hell, and wrong with right confuse,
To push their lawful rulers from their stools ;
These are the cowards who refuse to fight
A foreign foe, and soil the sacred name
Of country with her children's gore, who burn
The proudest trophies of imperial might ;
Who marshal harlots in the ranks of fame,
And honest men's undying hatred earn.

October 24, 1878.

WORK AND REST.

GIVE my brain work ! the enthusiast wildly
cries ;

Give my brain rest ! the weary toiler prays ;
Rest pains: work pains: both follow different ways,
Yet each demands relief and sympathies.

Give each their prayer ! the toiler, resting, dies ;
The enthusiast, losing strength and hope, decays ;
Though both, illumined by the mind's bright rays,
Love the dear pain, and hug their agonies.

Thus pain for work devised, completed not,
And pain for overwork, are brethren twain ;
Dissimilar, yet alike : poor strugglers, rest !
The longing heart, though failing, makes no blot ;
And energetic labour should not pain ;
But both united must indeed be blest !

MIDDLE AGE.

THEY glory is the glory of the sun,
Whose chastened beauty in the twilight
glows,
And tenderer yet, and yet more tender grows,
As nearer to the goal his course is run—
The farewell Glory of a day nigh done !
Then all the peaks assume a tint of rose,
And the grey rocks a ruddy light disclose,
The blush of Even at her victory won.
How calm, how peaceful such a moment's rest !
Not wooing love with passionate desire,
But placid—perfect in mature repose.—
Such, Lady, are thy charms, by all confess :
Past the meridian glare, the summer fire,
Yet, oh, how far from winter's dreary snows !

September 6, 1874.

OLD AGE.

THERE is a beauty Youth can never know,
With all the lusty radiance of his prime,
A beauty the sole heritage of time,
That gilds the fabric with a sunset glow,
And glorifies the work it soon lays low !
There is a charm in Age, wellnigh sublime,
That lends new lustre to the poet's rhyme,
As mountain-peaks are grander crowned with snow.
How gay the laugh of Youth ! but oh ! how brave
The stately weakness of a reverend Age !
Be ours the task to solace and to cheer,
To fondly guide its footsteps to the grave,
To print a blessing on the final page,
And cherish memories for ever dear !

MIDNIGHT, 1872-3.

FLY not, old year, too swiftly; say “Good-bye,”
Let us part friends, shake hands before you go;
Time tolls out “Yes,” when neither can say “No,”
And these harsh partings dim the brightest eye.
It is not that we fear the end more nigh,
For the great end brings joy instead of woe,
When we may join the loved ones long laid low,
And change for angel-smile our earthly sigh.
But that, Old Friend, we know not what may come,
Of sorrow and regret when thy young Heir
Has set thy crown upon his brow. Farewell!
Alas! farewell for ever! here at home,
Grateful I own thy blessings and thy care,
And listen sadly to thy funeral knell.

HEAVENLY HARVEST-HOME.

THERE is no constancy in things below,
There must be constancy in things above—
Above, below, our prize is ever Love ;
From Heavenly plants divinest blossoms blow.
If earthly love melts like the spring-tide snow,
Pure while it lasts, it still is Treasure-trove,
Which the glad finder scarce knows how to prove,
Till time cuts short the branches ere they grow.
But time o'er Heavenly love has no control ;
And after time has reaped, God's gleaner comes,
And, loving all, garners each downcast ear
From the torn stalk, divides the longing soul,
And gathers it to those glad Harvest-homes
Where hearts are purified, and eyes see clear.

THE TRIUMPHS OF LITERATURE.

“ **T**IS the last straw that breaks the camel’s back,”

I’ve read I know not where, nor care to ask,—
So, trembling lest Thy strength it overtask
I lay this little straw upon Thy Pack
Laden with priceless gems through the long track
Of centuries, since Learning tore the mask
From Vice and Ignorance. Be it mine to bask
One moment in Thy Light,—all else how black !
No people claim Thy triumphs as their own—
Italia, Greece, the swarthy Orient, all
Are but Thy slaves to-day, or yesterday.
Thou laugh’st at Time ; all Languages have grown
From Thee ; Thine Eden’s grace and Eden’s fall,
All rose from Thee, and cannot pass away.

LIGHT.

If in the darkness of to-morrow's day,
And in the dim obscure that veils the hours,
I own the presence of those shadowy powers
That sport with reason, and with judgment play ;
I feel it less when some warm sunny ray
Dispels the menace of disheartening showers ;
But when thick mist or angry storm-fiend lowers,
My spirits in bleak regions lonely stray.
Then grant me beams, kind Heaven ! from above,
To glad a heart that ever seeks the Light ;
Disperse the clouds that gather round the mind ;
Let Sunshine bring his comrades, Peace and Love,
And daunt the sable messengers of Night :
In Light I see, in Darkness grow stone-blind !

LIFE AND DEATH.

HOW can I purify my soul from dross
That poisons hearts with its impure alloy ?
How gain eternal, craving passing joy ?
How sue for heavenly, dreading earthly loss ?
Rough winds, and rougher seas may wildly toss
My little bark, that like a painted toy
Rides the dark waters, when such storms annoy,
But Death must surely some day “swim the foss.”
Ah, then, how vain are all Life’s troublous dreams !
How poor our struggle and how mean our strife !
How bleak the past ! the present, ah, how dread,
When Death’s bright sunset like a glory gleams,
And for this fleeting we gain endless Life !
Oh ! who could choose to be for ever dead ?

ALONE.

I SAW the sun obscured, the lightning dart
Its forkéd tongue from out a sable cloud ;
The big drops fell, the thunder boomed aloud,
And the dread sounds found echo in my heart.
My heart, that like the sun, had found rich part
In the full glow of summer, here was cowed
By the dark noisome shadow of the crowd
That thronged my loved one, like a thing i' the
mart.

The thunder ceased to roar—the crowd passed by,
The lightning faintly faded in the west,
The rain dried up its tears, as quickly gone
As shed ; the sun once more shone lustily—
My heart leapt out to her whom I loved best,
But ah ! in vain, for I was left Alone.

THE DISCONTENTED.

THERE are, who in this changing life revile
The day-by-day occurrences they meet—
Turn sweet to bitter, ay, make bitter sweet,
Rather than be content and wear a smile.
To these no fair occasions offer ; for unfair
All circumstance appears : the sun shines wrong,
The rain is foolish, time itself too long,
The air inclement—victims everywhere !
Oh ! could they see, as I have seen, the poor,
Racked by real anguish, worn by want and pain,
Contented bend, and humbly kiss the rod ;
Perchance they too might seek the cottage door,
And learn a lesson to their endless gain,—
And for His constant mercies thank their God.

ABANDONED.

MINSTREL of minstrelsy too false for me ;
 Coiner of coinage never more to pass ;
Singer of songs, whose voice is sounding brass ;
Heedless no more, I heed,—but heed not thee.
Framer of frames where portraits ought to be ;
Schemer of schemes all brittle as a glass ;
Swearer of oaths too well believed, alas !
Slavish no more, I slave,—but not for thee.
Liars like thee at last must lie in vain,
Dreamers like me must cease to dream at last.
Too credulous, I doubt, and doubt for ever ;
And the vile anguish of my endless pain
Remembered always, though the shock be past,
Perforce from me all faith, all love, must sever.

PURE LOVE.

PURE Love is tender of another's pain,
Forgetful of her own ; lives in the life
Another bears ; forgiving, often weeps,
Yet never hopeless ; counting loss for gain,
If that loss be but hers ; averse to strife,
Though her keen watch o'er honour never sleeps.
Woe to pure Love whene'er her footsteps stray !
Woe to fond hearts when Passion fans the flame,
And brains distempered hold a hurtful sway,
And bandage up the eyes that guard her fame !
Then welcome death—sweet, tearless, sinless sleep,
Where slumber tempts not, and where eyes ne'er
weep.

Far happier thus than when, Life's spring-tide gone,
Affrighted Reason flies her tottering throne.

LOVE IN AGE.

THE boon of Age, when Love has taken flight,
And left us a stray feather from his wing
To play with, is a tender heart, to bring
The memory of the truant to our sight !
Not what we are, but what perchance we might,
With some kind help, be ; a convenient thing
That serves to play with, yet the bitter sting
Of grey-haired failure never brought to light !
Ah me ! the rosy lips of careless youth
That vanquished, ignorant of the art of war,
The words that were a library—the sighs
That seemed a malady—and all in truth—
And now, the careful handshake from afar,
And subtle glances that are mostly lies !

DEFENCE, NOT DEFIANCE.

WE did not fly to arms in idle boast,
To show fine stalwart forms in fancy
dress,
To grasp a useless sabre, or to hold
A rifle for vain show, in emptiness.
We armed—still arm, to guard our sacred coast ;
And in Defence the gentlest hearts grow bold.
Thus, a free state, free soldiers sends to fight,
“ Aye ready ! ” and in earnest, when the vaunts
Of jealous neighbours overstep the right,
And eager preparation backs their taunts.
Then leap the youth of Britain from their rest,
And swear no stranger shall their homes molest ;
E'en tenderest birds, provoked, grow brave in blood,
Beat back the invader, and defend their brood :

THE VOLUNTEER REVIEWS:

WINDSOR AND EDINBURGH.

July and August 1881.

A HUNDRED thousand hearts were at thy feet,
VICTORIA ! those two memorable days !
Thy crown, no warrior's girt with blood-stained bays,
But the fair Chaplet of Devotion, meet
To bind Thy brow ! while echoed every street
With arméd tramp, the city's crowded ways
Rang with the joyous war-note of Thy praise ;
A people's praise to Thee sounds doubly sweet !
What if a kindly sun warmed Windsor's sward ;
What if in Scotland fell unceasing rain ;
Our Queen the storm and sunshine shared with all ;
For Her, a people's love the great award,
And Her dear Country, not aroused in vain,
A Volunteer Herself at duty's call.

“SURTOUT SOIS JUSTE.”

I WANDER in the body ; but not less
My wanderings take an insubstantial shape,
And in the hour when weary senses gape,
And vacant minds proclaim their emptiness,
My truant fancy travels far abroad ;
And in grey twilight, as in golden morn,
'Mid joyous memories, 'mid thoughts forlorn,
She treads life's changing and precipitous road.
Help me, just Heaven ! to draw conclusions right,
Nor rashly blame, nor vainly praise too soon ;
To stumble not in the dark paths of night,
Nor run too wildly in the full o' th' moon.
Thus young I prosper ; and when bent with years
I cease to wander, thus gain kindly tears.

IN THE CLUB-ROOM.

ONCE more by God's good grace I watch the time
Draw slowly on to sound the last dread knell
Of the old Year ; and like the funeral bell,
Ring out the dirge of death with muffled chime.
In every land, in every varied clime,
Hearts at this time have something new to tell
Both of the past and future, ill or well,
And often laughter checks the sad sublime.
Extremes meet in the busy club-room,—here
The oldest fogey and the youngest boy,
Jostle in word and thought, yet minutes fly,
And with still step creeps in the infant Year :
Then old and young shake hands. May months of
joy
Be thine, young Year. Good-bye, old Year, good-
bye !

December 31, 1876—11.40.

WOMAN'S FATE.

AND has it come to this? the suppliant rules,
And all his vows are scattered on the wind ;
He knows his power, and once so cruel-kind,
Girds at me now as taught in meaner schools,
And with contempt scarce veiled calls women
“fools,”
And cries, “Not I, 'twas Thou—so loving-blind,
How couldst *thou* guess the workings of my mind?”
They cut their hands who play with keen-edged
tools :
Just Heaven ! can trifling with a woman's heart
Bring down no judgment on the trifler? Say,
When he implored, knelt, pleaded, promised all,
Was I to blame who trusted him with part,
Though 'twere the greater part? Must such as they
Stand scathless, and the true ones only fall?

TRUTH *V.* PASSION IN POETRY.

I WILL not own that “ Passion ” is the food
The Muse likes best to feed on ; 'tis the life
Of much the wild and unrestrained desires
Of man find pleasure in ; the true, the good,
The pure fair aliment of maid and wife
Is withered in those hot and sensual fires.
The Muse I love belongs to every age ;
And, true herself, writes truth, and truth alone :
Nature and truth live pictured on her page ;
Without the one the other were undone.
Thus the grey morning, half enwrapt in night,
Gives a cold welcome to the rosy light ;
And thus the glowing sun, at evening’s hour,
Takes half his beauty from a softened power.

PAST AND PRESENT.

THE time is past ! What time ? The time for
good ?

Nay, that can ne'er be past ; the stream flows on ;
The silver dimples of the wave are gone,
But other waves succeed in endless flood.

The time is come ! What time ? Here's ample food
For meditation ; neither time alone,
The Past or Present, ever can atone
For future wrong, or heal a sickly mood.

The time will come,—ay, time will come indeed—
And for that time the bravest must prepare,—
When black Past, blacker — bright, still brighter
seems ;

Ah, then, how keenly search we for some deed,
To ease our dying souls of load of care,
And gild our Present with its golden beams !

NATURE.

THE heart contains the passions of the mind,
The mind controls the passions of the
heart ;
So truth and feeling guide the painter's art,
And teach the ignorant to know their kind.
The poet revels in a fancied power,
Not his, nor yet another's, Nature's all ;
His highest thought but answers to her call ;
His noblest verses are her noblest dower.
Like poets, painters can create the life
That breathes upon their canvas, from a source
Unknown to many, yet true talent's force
Is Nature reproduced through patient strife ;
Thus human art is humbled to discern
The God of Nature rules o'er all we learn.

RAIN! RAIN!

FOR three-and-twenty days the purple head
Of yonder mountain through the rain has
frowned

Mist-clad, grey-glooming, weird, disheartening :
The swollen river overflows its bed ;
Its waves, once bright, are dismally embrowned,
And the green valley weeps like living thing.
The deer, with drooping antlers, leave the crest,
And browse on soddened herbage at the base ;
The grouse cower sadly, with bedraggled breast
And ruffled plumage, in some sheltered place.
All Nature longs for autumn's genial days
To shine once more beneath his ripening rays ;
And I, with ready rifle, rod and gun,
Cooped idly here, am pining for the sun.

TO A. A.

FOR twice eight days, dear Friend, from morn
to eve,

And after shades of eve have drawn to night,
And the full moon has silvered all the lake,
Lighting up glen and corrie with her light,
Have we, in vain, o'er Weather tried to grieve,
For each from other novel thoughts did take.
In fancy, I have trod grave Academe,
And thou, again, hast braved the purple tide
Where rolled in distant lands War's ruddy stream ;
Or talked we not of some ideal bride ?
To little purpose prayed we for the sun !
For ceaseless rain spoiled sport ere well begun ;
Yet Friendship flourished, like a flame whose force
Is fed by tempests of opposing course.

ADIEU.

A FEW short days of pleasant intercourse,
Of sweet communion of thought and soul,
Have passed away, as all things here must pass.
How few days pass and leave us quite heart-whole,
And as they found us ! sorrow and remorse
Form the great retrospect of life, alas !
Yet these have sped, and memory survives,
To cast a “longing, lingering look” behind :
For I might live a century of lives,
And never meet a Friend more true, more kind.
Oh think on me, as I shall ever dream
Of these bright hours of by-gone happiness.
We glide in different barks adown life’s stream.
I may not love thee more, I cannot less.

SYMPATHY.

RELIGION of the heart, in things divine,
Means love of God, and charity to man
In human matters ; the Apostle's pen
Wrote words of fire, engraved upon the shrine
Within the holiest, " Faith and Hope are nought
If Charity be wanting ; " love to all—
Love, self-denying, calling nothing small,
Needing no learning though itself untaught—
From such there springs, as lesser springs from
great,
Soft Sympathy, blue-eyed, with gentle voice,
Too generous e'en for friendship ; all mankind
To her are friends, she owns none separate ;
She has a heart for all, bids all rejoice ;
One universal love fills all her mind.

GLENQUOICH.

GLENQUOICH! here may misanthropes recall
The first fond visions of their infancy,
Ere yet their early sweetness turned to gall,
And the fresh fountain of their hearts ran dry.
Here may the woe-worn wretch forget his grief,
And smile with new-found pleasure once again—
Here in Thy heathery wilds find sure relief,
And live oblivious of his former pain ;
For Nature here, with outstretched arms, invites
Each passer-by to share her glad delights,
Not rugged wild, to bruise with stern caress,
But blent with art, a cultured wilderness !
Far from the abodes of man, yet all unite,
With one accord—the young, the fair, the bright
To this blest spot to pay their homage come,
And worship Nature in her mountain home.

ABDUL-AZIZ.

WHAT Oriental Despot now can claim
Ancestral privilege of ruling ill?
What Western Monarch throned on popular will
Can boast his kingdom safe, with evil name?
None! they must rest their lives on noble fame
And honest deeds, lights set upon a hill,
That all may see a prudent ruler's skill;
Clear eyes averted from all deed of shame,
And hearts to win love—monarchs are but men.
Thus may they nobly keep their high estate,
Nor hear the grovelling sycophants deride!
Thrones totter to their base and fall,—what then?
A nation's curses and a nation's hate,
Flight—the assassin's knife, or suicide!

DISAPPOINTMENT.

THROUGH the long vigil of a sleepless night
To watch and listen for the chime of morn,
To mark the splendour of the day new-born,
When all the Orient flushes into light ;
To cry “half-won,” and, radiant with delight,
To laugh the heart’s forebodings all to scorn—
To fling aside the rose, and plant the thorn,
Unconsciously, in confidence of might :
Then, lo ! grey mist obscures the glowing sun,
The hand unnerved, lets fall the staff it grasped,
The exultant voice sounds hoarse, and choked and
low,
And triumph fails before her course be run ;
And victory, ere the precious prize be clasped,
In Disappointment veils her downcast brow.

NIGHT.

NIGHT—painted black-browed by the poet's
pen,
Gloomy, thick-veiled, at strife with honest deeds,
Star-studded, worshipped by a thousand creeds !
I greet thee well : welcome to weary men !
Not the sick souls who cavil at each day,
Whose languid struggles imitate true work,
Whose brawny shoulders honest labour shirk,
And turn real effort into idle play ;
But the keen hearts who resolutely strive,
From rose-crowned morning to the set of sun,
To gain some end that knits the muscles close,
(It may be merely pastime keeps alive
The strenuous exertion once begun),
To these thou'rt welcome with thy glad repose.

HOPE ON—HOPE EVER.

THE sun has mounted high ; the sickly drought
 Grasps the thin throat of many a fragrant
 flower,
And turns their lingering sweetness into death.
Poor life ! ephemeral, that sinks to nought
And dies, sad victim of a sunny hour,
Scorched in its childhood by a sultry breath !
Ah me ! how false are morning dews that raise
The promise of a bloom ! Sap rises free,
And green leaves sprout, and herald strength and
 life !
Thus have I seen the flattering dews of praise
Nourish the seed with hope and vigour rife,
And the hot glare of malice scorch the tree.
Yet Heaven's soft rain may quench the baleful heat ;
And some day Victory may atone Defeat.

EDUCATION.

THE oak once lay within the acorn-cup ;
The infant holds the future of the man ;
The minutes, fleeting, compass a life's span ;
The raindrop swells the foaming torrents up ;
Climate and soil make varied timber grow ;
And differing educations change the child.
Time is resistless ; terrible and wild,
In some dark seasons mountain-streamlets flow ;
Thus Nature owns an outer influence,
But childhood most of all. Be ours to guide
Their early days with the soft hand of love ;
To teach the truth, and that, with least pretence,
To show example none can e'er deride,
And point the way to happiness above !

THE RIVER.

THERE is a River whose deep waters flow
 Silent and swift to a blue inland Sea ;
And purple hills frown gloomily above,
And grassy meads smile tenderly below.
That River is the type of one whose plea
For many an erring word is Nature's love ;
The ever-changing stream portrays his heart,
The purple mountains point at life's distress ;
The meadows at the brink are fitting part
Of those who cheer him through this wilderness.
Yet blend the mountain, meadow, and the stream,
Then joys and sorrows in one band appear :
So, to my soul, dear friends, kind voices seem ;—
With me they smile, with me they shed the tear.

TRUTH.

WHO loves the Truth, and, clinging to his love,
Lives for his love, and makes his love his life,
Detects in every lie the cruel strife
That shatters love, and casting down his glove
Becomes Her Champion, nothing makes him quail!
He buckles her bright falchion to his side,
And grasps her lance, as some full-hearted bride
Grasps her new lord with love that cannot fail.
Oh ! onward in that pilgrimage of power !
Forward ! Enthusiast of the Truth, and live
In the deep love such life can only give,
Heedless of sunshine, or if storm-clouds lower.
Love, Truth, and Life in triple union stand
On Earth—in Heaven—an Eternal Band.

OLD PRINTS

IN A PORTFOLIO.

THEY lie within this purgatorial book,
In patient waiting for the Day of Doom,
As lost, as labour of the Tyrian loom,
This courtly smile or that imperious look!
Here simpers Phyllis with a flowery crook,
And there frowns one who sought the cannon's
boom,
And courted peril, as a mistress, whom
He madly worshipped, and by yonder brook
A loving pair stand gazing into space,—
They whisper fondly of their future home
Though dead a hundred years! A cruel fate
Is theirs indeed, each packed within this case,—
Unhappy prisoners in a dusty tome
That closes o'er them like the Inferno's Gate!

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